

Fourth Week of Advent



Luke 1:26-38

The angel **Gabriel** was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of **David**; and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her, "Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you."

She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, "Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour. **Listen!** You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end."

Mary said to the angel, "But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?"

"The Holy Spirit will come upon you," the angel answered, "and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called **Son of God**. Know this too: your kinswoman **Elizabeth** has, in her old age, conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God."

"I am the handmaid of the Lord," said Mary "let what you have said be done to me." And the angel left her.

Focus Questions

1. What does it mean of the words from the angel 'so highly favoured'?
2. Why was Mary disturbed by the words of the angel?
3. Was her fear reflective of unbelief?
4. Why did the angel told Mary that her son must be name 'Jesus'?
5. Who is Elizabeth? Why is she important in this story?

REFLECTION

- Reflect, today, upon your own knowledge of the truth. Are you able to consent to the will of God and the truths of God without fully understanding them? Do you trust God more than you trust your own human reason? Are you willing to move forward in life by faith rather than by your limited human reason alone?
- Strive to imitate the pure faith-knowledge of our Blessed Mother. She knew the truth because it was spoken in her heart. And as she listened, she consented and embraced the holy will of God. We may want to follow her example and do the same.
- Mary is an example for us all. Her ongoing, complete obedience to God is what we are all ultimately called to. God's grace is sufficient to help us live a holy life. Reflect on where in your life you need to say "yes" to God, submitting to His will, and letting Him fill you with grace.
- What do you need to do this last week of Advent to prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ?